



IMPLEMENTING A SUCCESSFUL TASTE TEST AT YOUR SCHOOL

KNOW YOUR GOALS.

Before doing a taste test, establish a few goals that are easy to communicate. Are you implementing a taste test program to expand children's food choices? Promote or introduce local foods? Encourage healthier snack or lunch choices brought from home?

DEVELOP A FOOD COMMITTEE.

Meet with the food service director or cafeteria manager to discuss possibilities and then with the school principal to discuss your goals and to make a plan. Find parents and teachers who are supportive of the idea of a taste testing program. Your best allies are the people who work with the students every day. Most teachers will support a program, but be careful about adding to their workloads. Your committee can decide how often taste tests should occur, what format (in the cafeteria or classrooms), what foods to try, and how to fund the foods being tested (PTA's make great partners).

START SMALL AND THINK THROUGH THE DETAILS.

With the committee, decide what food you first want to feature. Where will you get it? (Perhaps your school wants to build a relationship with a nearby farm where you know you can get local potatoes.) What recipe will you try? How much will the ingredients cost? Does the kitchen or school have the staff and equipment to prepare the food? Who will prepare it?

BE RESPECTFUL OF SCHOOL NUTRITION STAFF AND TEACHERS.

School nutrition staff have a tough job, take pride in what they cook, and are busy. Teachers and other school personnel have a lot of time demands, too.

OFFER HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES.

Children learn best when they are actively involved and using their hands. Children who help prepare food for a taste test are more likely to try it, and like it than children who have not been involved.

JUST DO IT!

Meet with teachers and nutrition staff to find a date that works for a taste test. Invite parents to help, either in your weekly newsletter or through a special invitation. If you are considering a classroom taste test program, find a time each week or month that fits well into the class schedule. Once you have had one or two successful taste tests, invite your local political figures and the local paper to see for themselves that your school is making some school food changes.

COLLECT AND USE YOUR DATA!

Be sure to get tallies on the following three questions: *Did you try it? Did you like it? Would you try it again?* This data will provide invaluable insight, as well as get students engaged on the ground-floor.

For the complete guide for recipes and procedures, download the Vermont FEED: Guide to Local Taste Testing in Schools at www.vtfeed.org.



TASTE TEST SURVEY

DIRECTIONS: Use this form to collect information about your recipe!

1. Visit either each class in the school or the cafeteria during lunch times.
2. Highlight the whole grain, local fruit, or vegetable that is in your product.
(For example: if you are making zucchini bread, bring a zucchini)
3. Column One: Record the number of participants who you are surveying
(give them time to taste the new food).
4. Column Two: Record the number of participants who tried the food.
5. Column Three and Four: Record the number of participants who liked the food and then will eat it again (at lunch or breakfast).

Product _____

Number of Participants (at testing table)	"I tried it"	"I liked it"	"I'll eat it again"